

C. H. S.

BANDWAGON

CHRISTMAS ISSUE, 1953

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The Circusiana Magazine

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zine must be secured from both author
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The Editor Says

HARRY SIMPSON ILL

Harry Simpson, former editor of the Bandwagon, and a long time member of CHS is seriously ill. Harry came down with pneumonia on November 23, and was taken to a hospital in Hamilton, Ohio, where he was under an oxygen tent for several days. Harry stayed in Hamilton for 2 weeks and since has been taken to Stillwater Sanatorium, Dayton, Ohio, where he will be for a while. Of course the length of his stay will depend upon how he gets along, but from here it looks as though he may be there several weeks. Any members living in the vicinity may call on Harry—for company is one thing he'd like to have.

Harry has ever been an enthusiastic CHS member, and we are darned sorry to hear of his illness. We wish for him a speedy recovery—and will be looking for him on the lots next season.

WHY NOT GIVE YOUR
FRIENDS A BANDWAGON
SUBSCRIPTION FOR
CHRISTMAS?
\$1.50

NEW MEMBER

Charles H. Colson, No. 548
2201 Virginia,
Joplin, Missouri

'Twas the Night Before Christmas In Circustown

By Santa Claus (Fred Bailey Thompson)

Again, it is the night before Christmas, when the hearts of all my little friends will beat just a wee bit faster when I come to try to fulfill all their dreams.

My helpers and I work hard all the year here at the North Pole, making toys for all my little friends the world over. But now my big moment has arrived—The Night Before Christmas.

Many a little tousled head is gently lying upon its pillow, dreaming of me, "Santa", with my red suit and big fat tummy and hoping I will slide down their chimney and bring them the gifts they have longed for all the year. But you know, Christmas not only means a visit from me, Saint Nick, the Patron Saint, but also a time of rejoicing. This year I decided to visit a little city way down in Florida, which I will call Circustown, though in reality, it, to most of us, is known as the winter home of the circus.

When the season closes the people who perform on the circus go to their home in Circustown, which is situated adjacent to winter-quarters. The big tent that you saw when the circus played your home city is erected on a large plot of ground convenient for the circus folks to practice in, before going on the road again next spring.

There are many children in Circustown who are not performers, but they are children of the people connected with the circus. In this little city alone there are about six hundred children. Some of them are sick and crippled, but there are many who have good health and like you and I, can romp and play. Of course the sick and crippled little ones can't do this, but do you know what the circus does for them? Everyday a beautiful gold and silver chariot, drawn by six of the prettiest white horses the circus owns, comes by each little child's home and takes them for a ride through Circustown. Now wouldn't you like to ride in this gold and silver chariot and really live in Fairyland for a day? The name of this magic chariot is, "Alice In Wonderland."

But this is the night before Christmas. I had heard so much about this little town of Circustown and I had so many little friends there and had received letters from everyone of them except one little girl named Joan, so I decided to pay this town a visit on this Christmas Eve. Joan was the daughter of Kay Roletto, a famous trapeze artist. I was worried at not hearing from Joan because she was a precious little girl and I knew how much she thought of me, "Santa Claus". So I decided to hitch Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen to my sleigh and pay Joan a visit and also to satisfy my life long dream of seeing the way grown-up people made ready for the birth of the Christ Child.

I slipped into Circustown on this night before Christmas, not as Santa Claus, because I left my red suit and cap and whiskers back home in my toy shop. I wanted to see just what was taking place in this little city on the night before Christmas. You see when I come

at midnight with my sleigh full of electric trains, space pistols, great big dolls, wagons and bicycles and many other things too numerous to mention, I am so busy I don't ever get a real look at Circustown.

I tied Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen, all hitched to my sleigh, over by the elephant barn. Dancer and Prancer seemed to be a little restless. I think they were afraid of the elephants because Prancer just wouldn't be still. "Whoa boy, Whoa now Prancer, nothing's going to hurt you. Just stand there. I will be back in a little while." You see my reindeer had never been to Circustown this early in the night, on the night before Christmas, so they could not understand my visit without a sleigh full of toys for all my little friends. I finally got them quiet and as I stood for a few moments by my sleigh, listening, there was such a dead silence everywhere that I hardly could have heard a pin drop. Not a creature was stirring, no one except me, Santa Claus. Even from the four hundred little monkeys—not a chatter was heard. This gave me the assurance that this little circus city was certainly an example of "Peace On Earth, Good Will Toward Men," because everywhere I could feel it in the very air that God, high up in Heaven, was hovering over this entire little city.

Now, come with me in your thoughts as we travel over Circustown and let's see what we can find. I must hurry, because I have to be back by two o'clock Christmas morning and begin sliding down chimneys. First, we will visit that large tent, and what do we see? Oh, look on the very top of the tent—a massive star—showing us the way to the place of the birth of the Christ Child. Through all this darkness the star can be plainly seen. This is the most beautiful star anyone could behold, as it casts its reflection all over the lot. Why, this must represent "The Star of Bethlehem". As we are guided into the tent by this bright and shining star, we see camels tied outside and as we enter we see a Manger. Through the dimness we see three more camels arriving and the three Wisemen dismounting. We wonder how the three Wisemen knew which tent to come to for the birth of the Christ Child. Why, of course, they were guided by that beautiful Star of Bethlehem, just as we were.

Now let's stop by the elephant barn. Why, they are so quiet we can hardly realize where we are. There's Ruthy, Trilby, Mom, Queenie and old Modoc who is leading all the others quietly, swaying from side to side while their attendants sit beside them on the hay, not saying a word. From here let's visit the monkeys. They are just sitting perfectly motionless on their perches. This was something new for monkeys, but they seemed to be quietly sitting and waiting to hear some great news. From here let's visit the horses. We find they all lying down in fresh straw. No, they are not asleep, they are slowly munching hay as if also waiting for the birth of the Christ Child. I guess we had better look into the cat house and see my old friend Sultan, the big lion. As we neared him I spoke to him, but he just looked up lazily and waved his paw at me, as much as to say, "Be quiet, don't you know what's going to happen tonight?"

I guess I had better go over and see my little friend Joan now, as it's getting late. As I walked along through the darkness I could see the little chapel of Circustown with its brightly lighted cross, surrounded by holly and mistletoe. As I neared it I could

hear the organ softly playing, "Silent Night." It was then I realized that no matter how much you are enveloped in darkness there is always a shining light to guide you to the way of God. I stood for a moment before the chapel offering a silent prayer, thanking God for creating me—Santa Claus—to bring happiness to my little friends here in Circustown.

As I walked on toward Joan's house, I noted a dim light shining in the quarters of the Roustabouts, so I decided to peep in. I gently opened the door and saw a big fellow with an open Bible in his hand and as I listened—he was reading the story of the birth of Jesus—to a group of men sitting around him on the floor. This was a beautiful sight to behold, and from what I had seen, I had no doubt but that this little city knew the true meaning of Christmas.

I rushed up the steps of Joan's home. I leaned over and pushed the bell, soon I heard footsteps and as Kay, Joan's mother, opened the door I heard a little voice call out, "Who is it mommy?" Before Kay could answer I heard a rolling chair coming to the door, then Kay called to her—"Why, it's Santa Claus, Joan."

As Joan rolled up to the door I could not help but notice her disappointment when she saw me.

"Why, you are not Santa Claus. If you are, where's your reindeer and sleigh, your red suit and cap, your whiskers and big tummy? I don't believe you are Santa."

"I don't blame you for thinking I am not Santa. I have not come to bring your presents. I have not had a letter from you so I came by to get it. Then I'm going to jump into my sleigh and hurry back to my toy shop—but I will be back in the wee morning hours and when every little boy and girl in Circustown is asleep I will bring your presents, so give me your letter, because I must hurry back and pack up my sleigh." She stood there and studied me very closely and when that little smile came over her face I knew I had gained her confidence—"Mommy, will you please get my letter for Santa."

As Kay handed me her letter I leaned over and kissed Joan on her golden curls and her little face was beaming. As I went down the steps I turned and looked back at her. She was waving her little hands and called out to me, "Merry Christmas, Santa."

I walked over to my sleigh that I had tied near the elephant barn. There was a small light overhead and I opened Joan's letter, so I am going to read it to you—

Dear Santa:

I am a little crippled girl, seven years old. My Daddy went away to war and there is only me and Mommy left. I don't want much this Christmas, Santa—there are so many little boys and girls who won't get many presents—so give them most of the presents you had for me. All I want is a big dolly that goes to sleep, and cries and says mama. Oh yes, and I want one that wets in her diady's. So you just carry most of the presents to the little boys and girls who need them most and if you need the dolly, take it, too. I love you, Santa.

Joan Roletto
Circustown, Florida

After reading the thoughtfulness Joan had for others, I climbed into my sleigh and hurried back to my warehouse away up at the North Pole. As soon as I arrived home I loaded my sleigh to the very top, for my little friends in Circustown. Of course I had the most beautiful dolly for Joan—just like she requested.

As I traveled over the house-tops in the wee hours of the morning a great change had come over the quiet little city. It seemed to be filled with joy. The organ in the little chapel was ringing out with the music of "Joy To The World." The elephants were trumpeting, the monkeys were chattering with all their might, there was much noise in the cat house, the horses were neighing in the horse barn, so I knew there was joy in Circustown, for everyone was paying tribute to the birth of our Saviour.

As I climbed out of my last chimney I stood upon the housetop and cried out, "Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night."

After my experience on this Christmas Eve, I knew I had found a little city that understood the true meaning of Christmas and celebrated it for what it really is—The Birthday of Our Blessed Redeemer.

Winner Of Critics Guild Oscar Award for the Year 1952.

Printed in the U. S. A. Story Book Shop.

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Merry Christmas

and

Happy New Year

LET'S MAKE 1954 OUR BEST CIRCUS
SEASON YET

JOHN VOGELSANG, No. 285
NILES, MICHIGAN

Christmas Greetings

FROM

GEORGE L. CHINDAHL

MAITLAND, FLORIDA

Christmas Greetings

TO THE FOLLOWERS OF THE SAWDUST TRAIL

CHARLES B. KISTLER, CHS No. 128

ALLENTOWN, PA.

TO ALL MY FRIENDS IN SHOW BUSINESS
AND TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
"CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY"
IN AMERICA

I wish you all

*A Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year*

Larry Turnbull, No. 447

HORDEN, COUNTY DURHAM, ENGLAND

TO

All Members C. H. S.
and C. F. A.

and

Old Troupers Everywhere

"If Clouds this year have dimmed your Sky,
Or this and that has made the going rough
My prayer for you this Christmas Season,
Is that your skies will clear enough,
For you to have the most Joyous Christmas
of them all."

FRED BAILEY THOMPSON

C. H. S. No. 410

Season's Greetings

FROM

PAUL LUCKEY AND THE
SAUK COUTY CIRCUS BAND

BARABOO, WISCONSIN

Holiday Greetings

FROM THE OLDEST C. H. S. MEMBER

C. H. "Dad" WHITE, No. 101

FREDONIA, KANSAS

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

TO CIRCUS FANS AND CIRCUS FRIENDS

FROM

"Calliope" BILL GREEN

WASHINGTON, KANSAS

C. H. S. No. 9

Merry Christmas

TO FRIENDS AND FRIENDLY ENEMIES
EVERYWHERE. STILL WITH IT AND
FOR IT.

★ ★

Walter B. Fox

P. O. Box 147

MOBILE 2, ALA.

Season's Greetings To All!

From DON and RUTH DEWEES

ZANESVILLE, OHIO

Merry Christmas Everyone

CLARENCE SHANK, No. 336

CAMDEN, OHIO

Warmest Wishes of the Holiday Season

★ ★

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and many other items of interest to all
C. H. S. Members.

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Fred W. Stafford, Jr.

17 BARBARA ROAD
BRISTOL, CONN.

Greetings

FROM ARTHUR V. ISENBURG AND
HIS BOOK,

"MY TOWN & THE BIG TOP"

"ROUND AND ROUND THE BIG DRUM GOES,
AND WHEN IT'LL STOP NO ONE KNOWS."

My Family and I send Circus-Christmas-Christian
Greetings To All C. H. S., Winter Quarter Forces
and Families, and all our Official Family.

* * *

Arthur V. Isenberg, Chaplain, C.H.S

102 S. KENSINGTON STREET
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

TO ALL MY FRIENDS
BOTH FAR AND NEAR
I WISH A HAPPY
PROSPEROUS YEAR.

△ △

C. S. Karland, Owner
THE GREAT KARLAND SHOWS

HOWARD A. GUSLER, No. 478

Sends Greetings

FROM

ELGIN, ILLINOIS

LLOYD BENDER, No. 535

WISHES ALL CIRCUS LOVERS

A Merry Christmas

Season's Greetings

FROM STEUBENVILLE

RAY MARKLE, No. 544

RAYMOND G. "WHITEY" WHITE, No. 493

SAYS

Merry Christmas To All

TERRELL JACOBS TO K-M

Terrell Jacobs has announced that he will be with the Al G. Kelly-Miller Bros. Circus in 1954. He will present his cat act, in its entirety, as well as having other acts in the arena. It is expected that he will break a 10 bear act this winter for presentation next year. Present plans call for the arena to remain in place all during the performance, and to use it several times with different acts. It is also reported that the old time Lion and Balloon act is to be revived.

KING-CRISTIANI PART

The King-Cristiani Circus is no more under that title. A late report tells us that Floyd King and the Cristiani family have parted company. Floyd will go out next year under the King Bros. title, with Arnold Maley in the position of co-owner. The Cristianis are planning a European jaunt, and may be back in this country next winter for indoor dates.

The sympathy of the Circus Historical Society is extended to C. "Duke" Patterson of Cincinnati, Ohio. Duke is new to C. H. S. but an old friend to many of us in this vicinity. His Mother enjoyed staying all day on the lot and brought food with her which fans and performers enjoyed.

We hear that Mrs. M. G. Gorrow, the wife of one of our members is ill. We hope that she will make a speedy recovery.

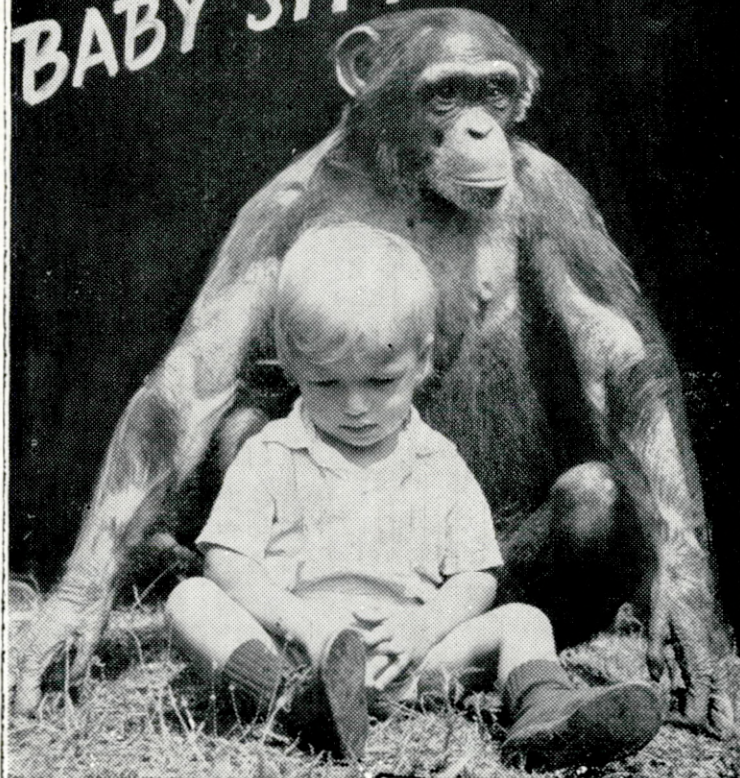
Also, Florence Stancliff, one of our members has been ill, but is much better now.

Greetings

TO ALL FANS

The British Circus Ring

CIRCUS BABY SITTER



Season's Greetings

May you have a Good Circus Year in 1954



BOB, AGNES and ANN KING

(The Baby is Roman Schmitt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Hugo Schmitt.
The baby sitter is positively not a member of C. H. S.)



HERE IS MY CHRISTMAS WISH

ONCE AGAIN THE CANDLES GLOWING
BRING TO MIND, OLD TIMES, OLD
FRIENDS,
PROMPT THESE WISHES OVERFLOWING
PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL
TOWARDS MEN.



Your President and the guy that
pays the postage,

Fred and Bette Leonard